

January 6, 2021

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

Council-Manager Form of Government

Special Meeting – 6:00 PM

(Secretary's Note: Due to the COVID-19 crisis and state and local orders to remain safer at home and not gather, all Councilmembers and staff attended the meeting remotely, via teleconference.)

● **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Troxell commented on the day's insurrection at the United States Capitol.

Mayor Troxell noted there will be no opportunity for public input at this meeting; however, comments can be emailed or delivered through the City's website.

● **ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Pignataro, Gorgol, Gutowsky, Summers, Troxell, Cunniff
STAFF: Atteberry, Daggett, Coldiron

2. **District 4 Council Vacancy Interviews. (No Action Taken)**

The purpose of this item is to provide Council with the information needed to conduct interviews for the District 4 Council vacancy. The applicants that will be interviewed include:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Jessica Dyrdaahl | 5. Shirley Peel |
| 2. Erin Hottenstein | 6. Melanie Potyondy |
| 3. Philip Jensen | 7. Sidna Rachid |
| 4. Veronica Olivas | 8. William Wright |

Application materials for each applicant are attached.

The process is expected to proceed as follows:

- *Description of the process given by the Mayor (3 minutes)*
- *Opening statement based on direction from the Mayor - 1.5 minutes for each candidate (12 minutes total)*
- *Pre-defined question from the Mayor - 2 minutes for each candidate (16 minutes total)*
- *Pre-defined question from a Councilmember - 2 minutes for each candidate (16 minutes total)*
- *Pre-defined question from a Councilmember - 2 minutes for each candidate (16 minutes total)*
- *Follow-up questions from Councilmembers and discussion (30 minutes total)*
- *Closing statement - 1.5 minutes for each candidate (12 minutes total)*
- *Total time: 1 hour and 45 minutes.*

Mayor Troxell outlined the interview process. He requested each candidate use their opening statement to discuss why they have opted to apply and why now.

Jessica Dyrdaahl commented on her interest in government noting she is currently the advisor to student government at Colorado State University.

Erin Hottenstein stated she would seek to solve problems for as many people as possible in a role on Council and she commented on founding Colorado 50-50, a volunteer organization that encourages and trains women to run for office.

Philip Jensen commented on his time in Fort Collins and experience as an EMT responder.

Veronica Olivas commented on the change she has seen in Fort Collins and on the importance of social sustainability. She discussed her experience in public service and leadership.

Shirley Peel stated she would like to serve on Council to be able to give back to her community.

Dr. Melanie Potyondy commented on her appreciation of City government and stated she is invested in southwest Fort Collins.

Sidna Rachid stated governmental action is the best way to try to alleviate some societal problems and she stated her budgeting skills would benefit the City.

William Wright commented on the changes he has seen in Fort Collins over six decades and stated he would like to work full-time to address the challenges being faced by the community.

Mayor Troxell asked each candidate to describe their leadership style, how they plan to engage with Councilmembers and the community, and how they would work with Council's three direct-report employees.

Mr. Jensen stated he was a strategic business manager for many years and was successful at getting all team members to work in the same direction. He stated he likes to understand what drives people.

Ms. Peel stated she seeks to build bridges to effectively develop mutual solutions. She commented on her experience as an educator and stated reaching out to community members would be one of the best parts of being a City leader. She stated she would make herself available for the three direct reports and all City employees.

Ms. Olivas stated her leadership style includes leading the way, empowering others, inspiring a shared vision, and challenging the process. She commented on the importance of teamwork, acknowledgment of mistakes, and honoring public trust.

Ms. Rachid stated she would ask a lot of questions and do research as a Councilmember. She stated the public good must remain front and center.

Mr. Wright stated his leadership style is to identify problems, listen to the voices in the room, and brainstorm solutions.

Ms. Dyr Dahl stated her leadership style is transformational and she tries to motivate and encourage others to work together and collaborate toward a common purpose. She stated she would work to support Council in achieving its priorities. She commented on the importance of trust in leadership.

Dr. Potyondy commented on her ability to listen to multiple perspectives, synthesize information, and work collaboratively to come up with solutions that meet the needs of all involved stakeholders. She stated she is adept at working toward consensus but will advocate for items in which she strongly believes.

Ms. Hottenstein stated her leadership style is collaborative and stated it is important to research issues and gather opinions. She stated she is polite, professional and prepared and will be available and responsive to residents and City employees.

Councilmember Gorgol asked the candidates to discuss the most crucial issues facing Fort Collins and District 4.

Dr. Potyondy stated COVID is the most pressing issue facing every facet of life in Fort Collins right now and the response to it needs to take center stage. She stated one of her top three priorities for Fort Collins is preserving community character, including supporting local businesses and cultural facilities. She commented on the importance of housing, medical services, and employment and stated environmental sustainability should always be a guiding principle.

Ms. Rachid commented on the importance of preserving Fort Collins economy through the preservation of small businesses. She also commented on the importance of assisting with rent and evictions.

Mr. Wright stated his priorities include the preservation of small businesses, affordable single-family housing, and water acquisition.

Ms. Hottenstein agreed COVID is the most crucial issue that will need to be addressed. She commented on the role of the City in recovery and on the importance of affordable housing.

Ms. Olivas agreed COVID must be addressed as well as issues related to systemic and institutional racism. She also suggested looking at poverty outreach from a social services perspective.

Ms. Peel also agreed COVID is the most crucial issue facing the City and she commented on the importance of continuing to partner with the County to help protect first responders and those who are most vulnerable while also giving the business community the support and tools it needs to be successful. She also noted the City will need to deal with the budget shortfall and negative effects on low- to moderate-income families.

Mr. Jensen stated the pandemic has proved that working from home is quite viable and stated he would like to see the introduction of a program that would teach working from home skills. He also commented on the importance of clean energy technology.

Ms. Dyr Dahl agreed the pandemic and affordable housing are critical issues. She commented on the struggles of small businesses and on the importance of providing resources for mental health and rental utility and childcare assistance.

Councilmember Gutowsky asked the candidates to discuss which of the current Council priorities are most important and how they would approach the current Council priority list.

Ms. Olivas stated the most important priorities are community engagement, equity and inclusion, and affordable and achievable housing strategies. She discussed the importance of public outreach and applauded community volunteer representation on budgeting committees. She stated the equity indicators project will help identify gaps for outreach.

Mr. Wright stated his priority is small business support noting small businesses support the minimum wage workers that are most affected by the pandemic. He also stated affordable housing must be a priority for the coming years.

Ms. Hottenstein stated the top issues she found from a small survey of citizens were COVID response, economic health, and environmental health. She stated she would support Council's

goals of supporting small businesses and creating jobs.

Ms. Dyr Dahl stated her top priority is equity and inclusion and the support of those who are most marginalized. She expressed support for the equity indicators project.

Ms. Rachid commended the City on its efforts toward small business preservation and stated she would like to see additional work toward preventing evictions. She also stated she would prioritize affordable and accessible childcare.

Mr. Jensen commented on the importance of small business support and addressing air quality through mass transit and other means.

Dr. Potyondy stated equity and inclusion must be a driving force behind every discussion, but stated her focused priority is affordable and achievable housing noting having those basic needs met allows citizens to be able to access available options and work on other priorities.

Ms. Peel commended the City's approach with plans and priorities. She stated it is important to strike a balance between keeping people safe from COVID while keeping businesses alive. She also commented on the importance of a smart growth plan.

Councilmember Gutowsky noted this Council appointment would last until April and she asked candidates to describe their plans for campaigning for the Council seat in the April election.

Ms. Dyr Dahl stated she has filed her candidacy paperwork and has a website and team of people to help support her in the election.

Ms. Hottenstein stated she has filed her candidacy paperwork and is looking forward to running her campaign.

Mr. Wright stated he has filed his candidacy paperwork and is looking forward to talking to citizens in his district.

Dr. Potyondy stated she has filed her candidacy paperwork and is looking forward to campaigning.

Ms. Peel stated she has filed her candidacy paperwork and would be excited to be on Council long-term.

Mr. Jensen stated he has a website in construction and would like to continue to work with the City.

Ms. Rachid stated she has yet to form a candidate committee.

Ms. Olivas stated she would like to fill the position until April but does not plan to run in the April election due to a family commitment.

Councilmember Pignataro asked the candidates to find something near them that represents them and share that.

Mr. Jensen shared his multiple computers and album collection.

Dr. Potyondy shared a photo of herself and her husband and discussed their relationship and time

in Fort Collins.

Mr. Wright shared a painting he created representing all major religions.

Ms. Peel shared a photo of her children and discussed their careers.

Ms. Rachid shared a memento from Egypt and discussed her time living there.

Ms. Hottenstein shared her son's cello and stated she is looking forward to the time when music events can again be enjoyed.

Ms. Dyr Dahl shared her globe and discussed her travel to all 50 states and 50 countries.

Ms. Olivas shared a vintage butterfly from Portugal and discussed jewelry she makes as gifts.

Councilmember Summers requested the candidates address what it means to be data-driven, how that applies to policy making, and how they would make a decision if data they would like to have is not available.

Mr. Jensen stated data is a big part of his work and commented on not using data as the only factor in making decisions.

Dr. Potyondy stated data is important in her role as a school psychologist and she commented on the importance of ongoing data collection to ensure the success of programs or policies.

Ms. Olivas stated data can be used to prove facts but noted public input is also important.

Mr. Wright stated data does not always provide the entire picture and commented on the importance of acquiring facts and understanding circumstances.

Ms. Hottenstein stated being data-driven is important; however, it is important to ask good questions and keep the bigger picture in mind. She stated context and data need to go together to make policy.

Ms. Rachid commented on decision making.

Ms. Peel commented on using numbers to quantify results and direct policy; however, she noted data may not always be reliable, therefore it is important to also rely on common sense.

Ms. Dyr Dahl stated being data-driven involves using the information at hand to guide a framework and commented on the importance of using common sense as well.

Councilmember Summers thanked the applicants for their responses.

Mayor Pro Tem Cunniff requested the candidates reflect on the conversations to date and integrate that into their closing statements.

Mr. Wright stated he is a third-generation native of Fort Collins and he believes he is the right person to fill the Council seat. He commented on his passion to address food insecurity and stated he would work on that issue as part of Council.

Dr. Potyondy stated she is excited about this opportunity and thanked those who publicly proclaimed support. She commented on the importance of retaining what makes Fort Collins magical as it grows as a community. She stated she believes she has the skills, values, and personality to serve Fort Collins.

Mr. Jensen stated he would like to continue working with the City and would like to focus on working from home, clean energy, and support of the school system.

Ms. Dyr Dahl thanked the Councilmembers and staff for their assistance in this process. She commented on the world-class nature of Fort Collins and stated her work ethic, enthusiasm, dedication, and ability to be a connector make her a good candidate for the Council seat.

Ms. Hottenstein thanked the Councilmembers and staff for their support. She stated her ability to build consensus, help solve problems, collaborate, and work through differences make her a good candidate.

Ms. Peel commented on being encouraged by this process and stated she will work hard to continue to implement the vision already in place, will work to deal with problems caused by the pandemic, will work to build bridges between people and organizations, and will work to ensure smart growth.

Ms. Olivas commented on the need for inclusive cooperation now more than ever and stated the community needs an effective, engaging, and honest government that operates with vitality and compassion.

Ms. Rachid commented on the impressive candidate pool and discussed her desire to help those who are less advantaged.

Mayor Troxell thanked the candidates for their effort, time, and respect. He also thanked Councilmembers and staff for their engagement in the process. He outlined the next steps in the selection process.

Councilmember Gutowsky thanked the applicants.

RESULT: NO ACTION TAKEN

● **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

ATTEST:



City Clerk





Mayor